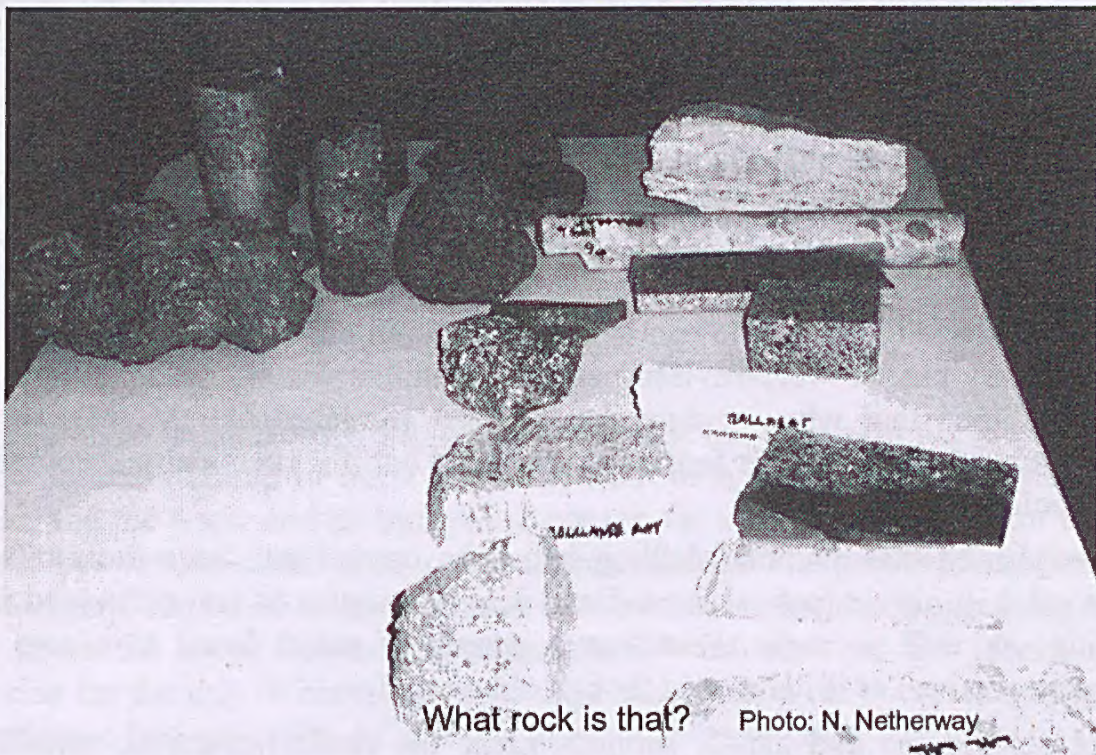


The Ballarat Naturalist

March 2010



WHAT ROCK IS THAT? FRAN HANRAHAN AND PHIL KINGHORN



Fran outlined the classification of rocks which she indicated was based on year 8 science but it was far more than I remembered from secondary school. Using a PowerPoint presentation the formation of different types of rocks was described. The initial classification of igneous, metamorphic and sedimentary was further broken down, mostly according to how the rocks were formed.

Igneous rocks are formed as the molten material from inside the earth cools when it comes to the surface. Material which comes peacefully to the surface and cools relatively quickly is basalt. If it is ejected explosively there can be volcanic bombs

and scoria. Plutonic igneous rocks are ones which cool more slowly and could be formed 5 to 10 km below the surface and subsequently exposed by erosion.

Metamorphic Rocks are rocks that have changed form due to heat and/or pressure. This occurs when magma intrudes through rocks which can cause them to melt and recrystallise. Regional examples of metamorphic rocks include slate, spotted slate, phyllite and schist.

Sedimentary rocks form from the settlement of material usually out of water but also from material blown by wind. There are also chemically formed sedimentary rocks for example limestone and rock salt where the material comes from dissolved material. Organically formed sedimentary rocks include coal. Sedimentary rocks are also classified according to grain size.

Phil Kinghorn complemented Fran's explanation by explaining and passing around the group specimens from his extensive personal collection. Samples included quartz and laminated quartz, slate, sandstone, siltstone, Ballarat West breccia, basalt, Lal Lal granite with thorium in it, and ignimbrite. There was also a sample showing at least three phases of deformation, Harcourt granite and granite from near Bonnie Doon, basalt with olivine plus many more that I was too interested in looking at and listening to the explanation to write down as they came past fast. Among the most interesting were ropy lava (in interestingly twisted looking rock), a volcanic bomb and fascinating orbicular granite from WA. It was also interesting to handle a bag of kaolin from Pitong which felt soft and powdery but we were advised not open it unless we wanted a real mess. It was explained that when granite decomposed at places like Mt Misery, Mt Bolton and Mt Beckworth it formed granite sand but if it chemically decomposed then kaolin could be formed.

Phil explained that diamond drilling had been carried out since the 1880s. A diamond drill bit was passed around and some examples of cores obtained from drilling. As well as rocks there was a sample of wood found in a core and concrete obtained as drills passed through old workings.

Being able to see and handle samples made the session practical, satisfied a curiosity about what the various types of rocks might look like and consolidated an ability to recognise rocks in the environment. Thanks to Fran for her presentation and for organising Phil to bring along his collection as well as thanks to Phil for again attending our meeting. The new venue proved most suitable, being able to have the meeting and supper in the same room made an easy transition after the presentation and allowed everyone to continue viewing samples. It was excellent to see such a good attendance for our first meeting of the year.

Peter Dalman

FEBRUARY CLUB EXCURSION TO WERRIBEE TREATMENT PLANT

Twelve keen, or curious, field nats, left Ballarat quite early to get to the Werribee Treatment Plant. Our small convoy drove via the Brisbane ranges and after a quick stop at Lara we began navigating the grid of roads that defines the treatment plant.

Our first stop at the Austin Road Ponds gave us a group of 18 Cape Barren Geese happily grazing, and across a wide lagoon a mixed mob of spoonbills. With their heads tucked in identification was difficult, even with the two telescopes out.

A group of cars a few lagoons away indicated a very important sighting.. Unfortunately by the time we found the spot, whatever really exciting birds had been sighted were there no longer. Never mind, a brief pause along the way stretched out to a long stay as we were attracted by a bunch of white fronted chats mucking about in the mud. And then, those of us new to the bird watching game, had the pleasure of seeing more experienced observers gradually narrow down the identity of an anonymous bird hiding in the reeds from a rail to a crane and then the Australian Spotted Crane!

A great start, and locking and unlocking gates as we went, we wove our way amongst a chequer board of lagoons. Each stop resulted in new birds to add to the day's tally. Repeated sightings of birds met earlier in the day gave some of us a chance to test our ability to recognise them. We were hampered though by the sad fact that on any given lagoon most birds will prefer the far side!

We had lunch at the Borrow Pit, where we spread out to exploit the few scraps of shade around a clump of trees. It was hot, but blue wrens sang from within the copse, and the water and its birds were not too far away. Our last stop of the day caused our veteran observers a small disappointment. The presence of other trippers down at the Point meant that most of the birds we had been expecting to see had flown the coop. However amongst the few left was our last identification exercise for the day. Wandering along the furthest shore (of course) and popping in and out of the concealment of a line of boulders we confirmed a sighting of ...a not so common...greenshank. A great end to the day.

The sheer number of water birds was a constant marvel to those of us there for the first time. As we travelled the flat, mostly treeless, geometric landscape, the result of such inauspicious beginnings, picture after picture came into view. Minor variations were played on a theme of blues, greens, and the dull browns blacks and greys of mud, rocks and birds with occasional highlights of white. It was all a delight.

Thank you to Greg and Ken for sharing their telescopes and to the experienced bird observers for sharing their knowledge so generously.

Elizabeth Thurgood

BIRD LIST FROM CLUB EXCURSION TO WERRIBEE TREATMENT PLANT IN FEBRUARY

Musk Duck
Black Swan
Cape Barren Goose
Australian Shelduck
Mallard
Pacific Black Duck
Australasian Shoveler
Grey Teal
Chestnut Teal
Hoary Headed Grebe
Little Pied Cormorant
Little Black Cormorant
Australian Pelican
White Faced Heron
Australian White Ibis
Straw Necked Ibis
Royal Spoonbill
Yellow Billed Spoonbill
Whistling Kite
Swamp Harrier
Wedge Tailed Eagle
Australian Spotted Crake
Purple Swampphen
Black-Tailed Native-Hen
Eurasian Coot
Marsh Sandpiper
Common Greenshank
Red-Necked Stint
Long-Toed Stint
Sharp-Tailed Sandpiper
Curlew Sandpiper
Black-Winged Stilt
Red-Necked Avocet
Masked Lapwing
Silver Gull

Crested Tern
Common Tern
Crested Pigeon
Superb Fairy Wren
White Fronted Chat
Magpie Lark
Willie Wagtail
Little Raven
Welcome Swallow
Common Starling

Compiled by Elizabeth Thurgood.



FEBRUARY MEETING IN OUR NEW MEETING ROOM

Our new meeting room proved a hit with members with plenty of room for display tables and seating. Extra seating was required to cater for the large number of members and visitors: this was great to see. There was also enough space to enable members to mingle over supper without having to move to another room. This encouraged more members to stay and socialise over a cuppa.



FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB OF BALLARAT INCORPORATED
No. A0014919P ABN 13 150 403 135
MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING - 5TH FEBRUARY 2010.

The president welcomed 32 members and 4 guests to the first meeting for 2010 and the first meeting held at the new venue – Prince of Wales Park Clubrooms.

Apologies have been received from Elaine Gregurke, Kaye Crawford, Mike Sorrell and Margaret Martin.

Apologies accepted on the motion of Carol Hall, seconded by Paul Norquay.

Minutes of the December meeting were tabled and summarised in the Ballarat Naturalist.

Confirmed on the motion of Greg Binns, seconded John Petheram.

Business Arising from previous meeting: - Deferred to general business.

Correspondence.

IN:

- Field Naturalists Club of Victoria: Victorian Naturalist, December 2009; Membership Renewal, \$70; Permission to print photographs; Field Nats News, Feb 2010; Donations to ANH Medallion fund.
- Bendigo FNC: Whirrakee, December 2009 & February 2010.
- Castlemaine FNC: Castlemaine Naturalist, December 2009.
- Geelong FNC: Geelong Naturalist, February 2010.
- Trust for Nature: Conservation Bulletin, December 2009; Membership reminder.
- Landcare Victoria: Landcare magazine, spring summer 2009.
- Royal Historical Society of Victoria: Gardeners Gazette, Summer 09/10.
- University of Ballarat: Account for use of Horticulture Centre in 2008 and July 2009.
- DSE: Midlands Wood Utilisation Plan.
- Minister for Environment and Climate Change: Securing our Natural Future – Land and Biodiversity white paper.
- City of Ballarat: Planning Scheme Amendment C95 approved.
- Australian Birdfair: 17-19 September At Leeton, NSW.
- Various: Registration for SEANA Autumn camp / Bendigo Bank: Statements.
- Margaret Martin: Thanks. / John and Allison Williams: Christmas card.
- SEANA Mailout: Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 21 March 2009 at Port Fairy, Minutes of General Meeting held on 3 October 2009 at Dunkeld, Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 30 January 2010, Agenda for Annual General Meeting to be held on Saturday 20 March during SEANA Camp at Ballarat, Agenda for General Meeting to be held following the AGM, Membership Application/Renewal form, SEANA Management Committee Nomination form.

OUT:

- Margaret Martin: Sympathy card.
- Payment for 6 months rent at Prince of Wales Clubrooms (\$210).
- University of Ballarat: Payment of Account and letter requesting invoice for 2009 room use.

Business Arising from Correspondence:

- SEANA membership renewal: That Field Naturalists Club of Ballarat pay \$15 to renew SEANA membership. Moved: Claire Dalman; Seconded: Denis Thurgood. Carried
- SEANA committee: John Gregurke's term expires and does not wish to renominate. Club ask to consider nomination of another member.
- SEANA General Meeting: Peter Dalman will report on the highlights of the FNCB and any issues which the club is facing. Each club allocated a 2 minute presentation.

Reports

- Treasurer's Report: Opening Balance \$6857.13; Income: \$203.00; Expenses: \$441.85; Closing Balance: \$6618.28.
- Prince of Wales Park clubrooms: Has been booked for 2010 meetings. Hire is \$35 per meeting. Locked storage cupboard for club library. Carol has offered the use of her data projector and we will pay her \$10 per night. These additional costs will have to be taken into consideration when setting 2010-11 membership fees.

General Business

Final arrangements were made for the excursion to Western Treatment Plant at Werribee, leaving at 8.30am from Ballarat Horticulture Centre. Leader: Greg Binns.

Syllabus 2010-2011: Most speakers have been confirmed.

- SEANA Camp: Registration forms due today. Nearly 60 people have registered to date.
- SEANA Camp: Members asked to volunteer for various jobs: registration, supper, excursion leaders and facilitators, etc. by signing up on the sheets circulated.
- Nominations for FNCB Executive and Committee for 2010-2011 invited invited.
- Members reminded that for the AGM up to 12 slides or digital images, or other objects on the topic "*Treasures from My Archives*" may be presented.
- Foxes and Rabbits at Lake Wendouree: That the Club contact DSE to find out who is responsible for control of pest animals at Lake Wendouree and what measure have been taken to control them. Moved: Nina Netherway, seconded Claire Dalman. Carried.

Show and Tell:

- Elizabeth Thurgood displayed the Kanawinka visitor guide now available at visitor information centres.
- Carol Hall showed a satellite photograph Britain covered by snow which was obtained from the internet. She also displayed photographs of Red-kneed Dotterel at WTP, Grey Goshawk chick at Clarksdale and Bush Stone-curlew at Serendip.
- Helen Burgess offered a book on vintage cars to anyone interested.

Field Reports

- John Mildren: Early in December a tortoise was observed laying eggs at North Gardens Wetland. The hole was filled when egg-laying was completed. A Crested Pigeon was nearby.
- Greg Binns: No water can be seen in Lake Burrumbeet. A few Black Duck in the creek. Swamp Harrier, Whistling Kite, Brown Goshawk and Brown Falcon observed flying over the lake.
- Several members reported seeing a variety of birds at Lake Wendouree in late January. However most of the surface water had disappeared early in February.
- Ken Hammond: Ruff, Wood Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper and larger numbers of Sharp-tailed Sandpiper.
- Carol Hall: Coot chicks in swan pool and 3 cygnets learning to fly.
- Val Hocking: Pair of Brolga.
- John Gregurke: Pair of Buff-banded Rail with 3 fluffy, black chicks in Fairyland.
- Tony Johns: Corrected a report from October 2009. Three Malleefowl were observed tending 3 separate nests in Hattah-Kulkyne NP.

Syllabus Item: "*What Rock is that?*" Dr Fran Hanrahan presented an outline of the classification of rocks. She then introduced Phil Kinghorn who displayed many local samples of rock. They were thanked by Peter Dalman.

Supper concluded the evening.

CALENDAR 2010

MARCH

Fri 5 AGM and Members' Images: *Treasures from My Archives*

Sun 7 SEANA Camp reconnaissance—Details at Fri 5 meeting.

New Meeting place for excursions: West side of Wendouree Pde. Adjacent to the main gates, opposite the restaurant.

Tue 16 Committee meeting at

APRIL

Fri 9 **NOTE CHANGE OF WEEK** due to Easter.

Amanda Ashton *Fire Effects on Animals*

Sun 11 Lake Wendouree, North Gardens and Macarthur Park Wetlands—
Club Member



SEANA Autumn Camp at Ballarat

Friday 19 March to Monday 22 March 2010.

Pax Hill Scout Camp

Club members please bring some slice or biscuits for Friday night supper at SEANA. Please do not bring anything that requires refrigeration as we hope to have enough for each night.

Committee

President..... Mr Peter Dalman
Vice-President..... Mr Greg Binns
Secretary..... Mr John Gregurke
Treasurer..... Mr Les Hanrahan

Miss Helen Burgess.....

Mrs Claire Dalman.....

Mrs Carol Hall

Mrs Val Hocking.....

Mr John Morrish

Dr Frances Hanrahan

Ms Nina Netherway (editor).....

Correspondence: PO Box 328W, Ballarat West, 3350

Email: Secretary:-John Gregurke,
Editor: Nina Netherway,

Website: www.ballarat.yourguide.com.au Click on *Community>Local Clubs> Environment*

Meetings are held at the Archery/Baseball clubrooms in Prince of Wales Park, Gillies St on the first Friday of the month at 7.30pm.

Excursions: Depart Wendouree Pde, West side near main gates, opposite restaurant, at 9.30am unless otherwise specified.

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